United Nations A/61/6 (Prog. 21)

General Assembly

Distr.: General
24 May 2006

Original: English

Sixty-first session
Item 117 of the preliminary list*
Programme planning

Proposed strategic framework for the period 2008-2009

Part two: biennial programme plan

Programme 21
Palestine refugees

Contents

	Page
Overall orientation	2
Subprogramme 1. Education	3
Subprogramme 2. Health	4
Subprogramme 3. Relief and social services	5
Subprogramme 4. Microfinance and microenterprise	6

* A/61/50 and Corr.1.

06-36174 (E) 150606

Overall orientation

21.1 The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was established as a separate entity within the United Nations system and as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly by resolution 302 (IV) from which UNRWA derives its mandate to provide continued assistance for the relief of Palestine refugees. Since starting its work in 1950, UNRWA has become the largest operational agency in the Middle East and has demonstrated the capacity to adapt and enhance its programmes, as required, to meet the evolving needs of refugees and to cope with developments in the region. It stands ready to continue doing so during the biennium 2008-2009 in accordance with the triennial mandate it receives from the Assembly.

21.2 The strategic objectives of UNRWA for the biennium 2008-2009 are to support the educational, social and economic development of the Palestine refugees, to provide targeted relief and social support for the most vulnerable refugees, particularly women, children and the disabled, and to increase the investment of the international community in improving the welfare of Palestine refugees.

21.3 UNRWA aims to achieve its objectives by maintaining and improving the provision of education and health services, relief and social support, and microfinance loans to registered Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, a population that may reach 4.5 million by 2008.

21.4 Since 2000, the Agency has provided emergency assistance to refugees in acute distress as a result of conflict, military operations, restrictions on the freedom of movement and prolonged economic hardship in the occupied Palestinian territory. This emergency assistance programme reaches over 1.2 million refugees annually. UNRWA will continue such services, as necessary, and will continue to provide, on an exceptional basis, as mandated in General Assembly resolution 2252 (ES-V), services to non-refugees in serious need of immediate assistance.

21.5 Internal strengthening is an organizational priority established during the previous biennium. It includes a dedicated project management function, improved policy development and implementation, and enhanced outreach capacity for the Commissioner-General of the Agency. UNRWA will continue its efforts to mainstream gender, both in programming and human resources management, and to develop further the Agency's protection response in programming, operation and advocacy, thereby bringing UNRWA closer to fulfilling its obligations vis-à-vis the directives of the Secretary-General, international human rights law, and the Beijing Platform of Action.

21.6 The Agency, which is largely dependent on voluntary funding to implement its programmes, has contended not only with chronic funding shortfalls, but also with more sudden, politically induced funding uncertainties. It will continue to maintain cost-conscious management, to carry out programme assessments, as necessary, and to maintain the operational flexibility required to respond to unforeseen disruptions to life and livelihood in Palestine refugee communities.

Subprogramme 1
Education

Objective of the Organization: to meet the basic educational and training needs of Palestine refugees, in particular children and youth, and to enhance their educational and employment opportunities

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Improved quality of education provided to the Palestine refugee population at all levels and increased access to educational facilities	(a) (i) Reduction in the dropout rate for pupils in the elementary education cycle (ii) Reduction in the dropout rate for pupils in the preparatory education cycle (iii) Reduction in the repetition rate for pupils in the elementary education cycle (iv) Reduction in the repetition rate for pupils in the preparatory education cycle (v) Increase in the pass rate of the comprehensive State examinations for semi-professional vocational training in Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza

Strategy

21.7 The strategy for attaining the objective includes:

(a) Supporting schools to ensure that each eligible Palestinian child has a place in school, where he/she receives quality education, and improving the services provided in vocational and technical training centres for better job opportunities;

(b) Maintaining an environment conducive to learning and meeting the needs arising from the natural growth in the refugee population by upgrading and constructing facilities and enhancing the skills and competencies of the Agency's teaching and training staff;

(c) Fostering work relationships with ministries of education in order to have ample time to respond to changes;

(d) Ensuring that equipment, tools and teaching aids are updated;

(e) Ensuring the maintenance of full gender parity in UNRWA schools;

(f) Providing educational services to Palestine refugees in accordance with the needs of the refugees, their identity and cultural heritage and consistent with the standards of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Subprogramme 2
Health

Objective of the Organization: to meet the basic health needs of Palestine refugees and to improve the overall state of health of their community

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Reduced infant and maternal mortality from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, with special emphasis on reduction of neonatal mortality	(a) (i) Increased percentage of infants delivered by trained personnel (ii) Increased percentage of pregnant women registered with health-care services
(b) Reduced morbidity, disability and mortality from communicable and non-communicable diseases	(b) (i) Maintenance of above 95 per cent immunization coverage rate against vaccine-preventable diseases (ii) Increased percentage of newly detected cases managed for non-communicable diseases
(c) Enhanced environmental sustainability in refugee camps and improvement of safe indoor water facilities	(c) (i) Increased percentage of camp refugee shelters connected to underground sewerage systems (ii) Increased percentage of camp refugee shelters provided with safe indoor water facilities
(d) Streamlined health policies and service standards to conform with those of the host authorities	(d) Increased number of partnership agreements and joint programmes with the host authorities
(e) Reduced number of nutritional disorders	(e) (i) Decreased prevalence of anaemia among pregnant women (ii) Decreased prevalence of anaemia among preschool children

Strategy

21.8 The strategy for attaining the objective includes:

(a) Focusing on integration of the various elements of care within a primary health-care approach, with special emphasis on reduction of risk factors and management of high-risk groups;

(b) Redesigning of the special programmes for control of non-communicable diseases and prevention and control of iron-deficiency anaemia in order to improve the impact of these programmes on the health status of the target group;

(c) Continuing investment in training and development of health staff;

(d) Strengthening partnerships with stakeholders to help mobilize additional resources and improve programme delivery by increasing efficiency and cost-effectiveness;

(e) Improving the efficiency of the distribution of food aid.

Subprogramme 3
Relief and social services

Objective of the Organization: to provide the most disadvantaged Palestine refugees with humanitarian assistance and promote self-reliance of less-advantaged members of the refugee community, especially women, the elderly, youth and persons with disabilities

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Improved social safety net provision for the lowest income refugee families	(a) (i) Percentage of shelters rehabilitated in relation to cumulative identified housing needs
	(ii) Percentage of assisted special hardship case families living below the poverty line
	(iii) Percentage of special hardship case families receiving selective cash assistance compared to total number of special hardship families
(b) Enhanced well-being of disadvantaged Palestine refugees	(b) (i) Increased number of individuals benefiting from loan products through the microcredit community support programme
	(ii) Increased number of persons with disabilities who received direct rehabilitation from community-based rehabilitation centres
	(iii) Increased number of women benefiting from awareness-raising, skills training and legal/social counselling

Strategy

21.9 The strategy for attaining the objective includes:

(a) Adopting a needs-based approach to alleviate poverty among the most vulnerable Palestine refugees instead of a status-based approach. This will require improving the targeting mechanisms to identify those living under the poverty line, particularly those under the abject poverty line. The latter will necessitate revision of the income thresholds and eligibility criteria;

(b) Providing short-term humanitarian assistance in times of crisis to relieve the suffering of the worst affected individuals, families and communities;

(c) Ensuring that all registered refugee data are recorded in a web-based and up-to-date electronic database that will serve as the hub of an effective management information system for the Agency;

(d) Promoting and facilitating community-based action through community-based organizations that create social, cultural, economic or educational opportunities and provide services for women, the elderly, youth and persons with disabilities and their families;

(e) Promoting the institutional capacity of community-based organizations through training and technical assistance to enhance refugee participation in the formulation and implementation of social services for vulnerable groups in their communities.

Subprogramme 4
Microfinance and microenterprise

Objective of the Organization: to improve the quality of life of small and microentrepreneurs, create and sustain jobs, decrease unemployment and provide income-generating opportunities for needy men and women through the provision of credit

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Increased business and income-generating opportunities	(a) (i) Increased value of loans disbursed
	(ii) Increased number of loans disbursed
(b) Improved development of the capacity of women microentrepreneurs	(b) (i) Increased number of loans provided to women-owned enterprises
	(ii) Increased value of loans provided to women-owned enterprises

Strategy

21.10 The strategy for attaining the objective includes the development of a range of self-sustaining credit products that are sufficiently comprehensive to meet the normal range of financial needs of microenterprise owners and Palestine refugee householders. The outreach of these products to the business and residential community will be provided through an expanding network of branch offices in each region to ensure that areas with significant Palestine refugee populations have access to the programme's loan products. Each branch office will be developed on the basis of institutional cost recovery and where the market is able to support self-sufficient credit operations.

Legislative mandates

General Assembly resolutions

3331 (XXIX)	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
302 (IV)	Assistance to Palestine refugees
59/117	Assistance to Palestine refugees
60/102	Operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East